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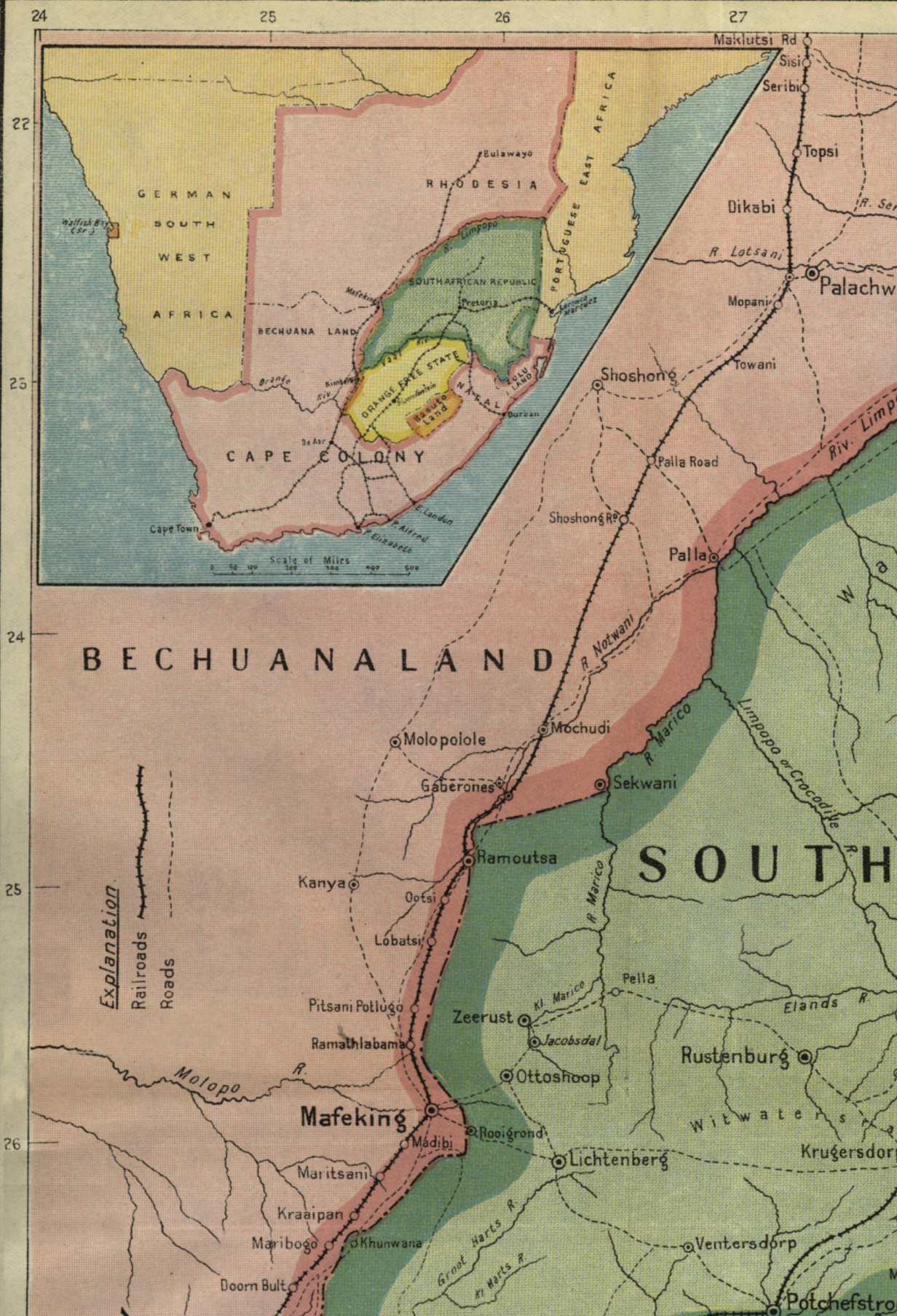
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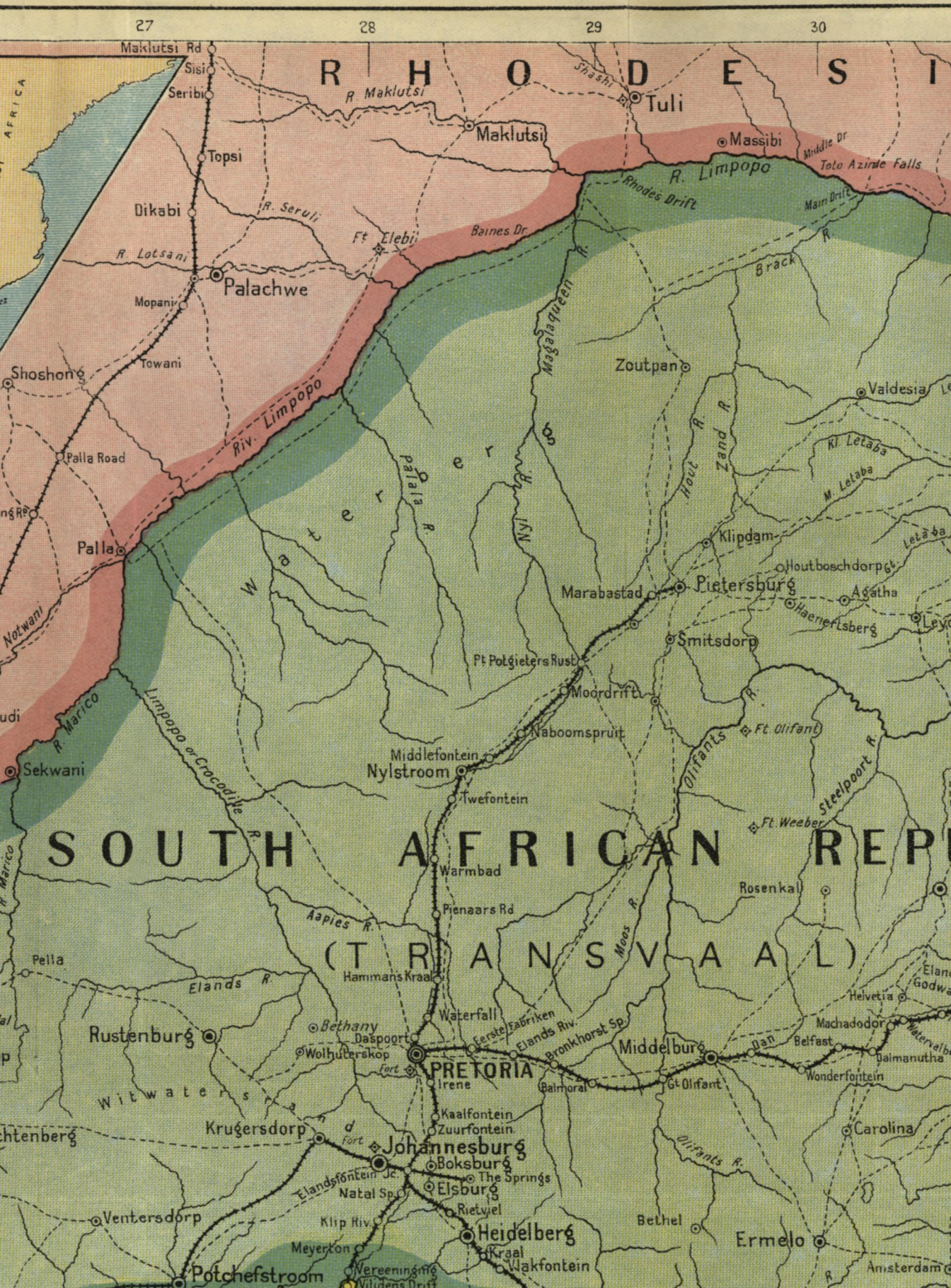
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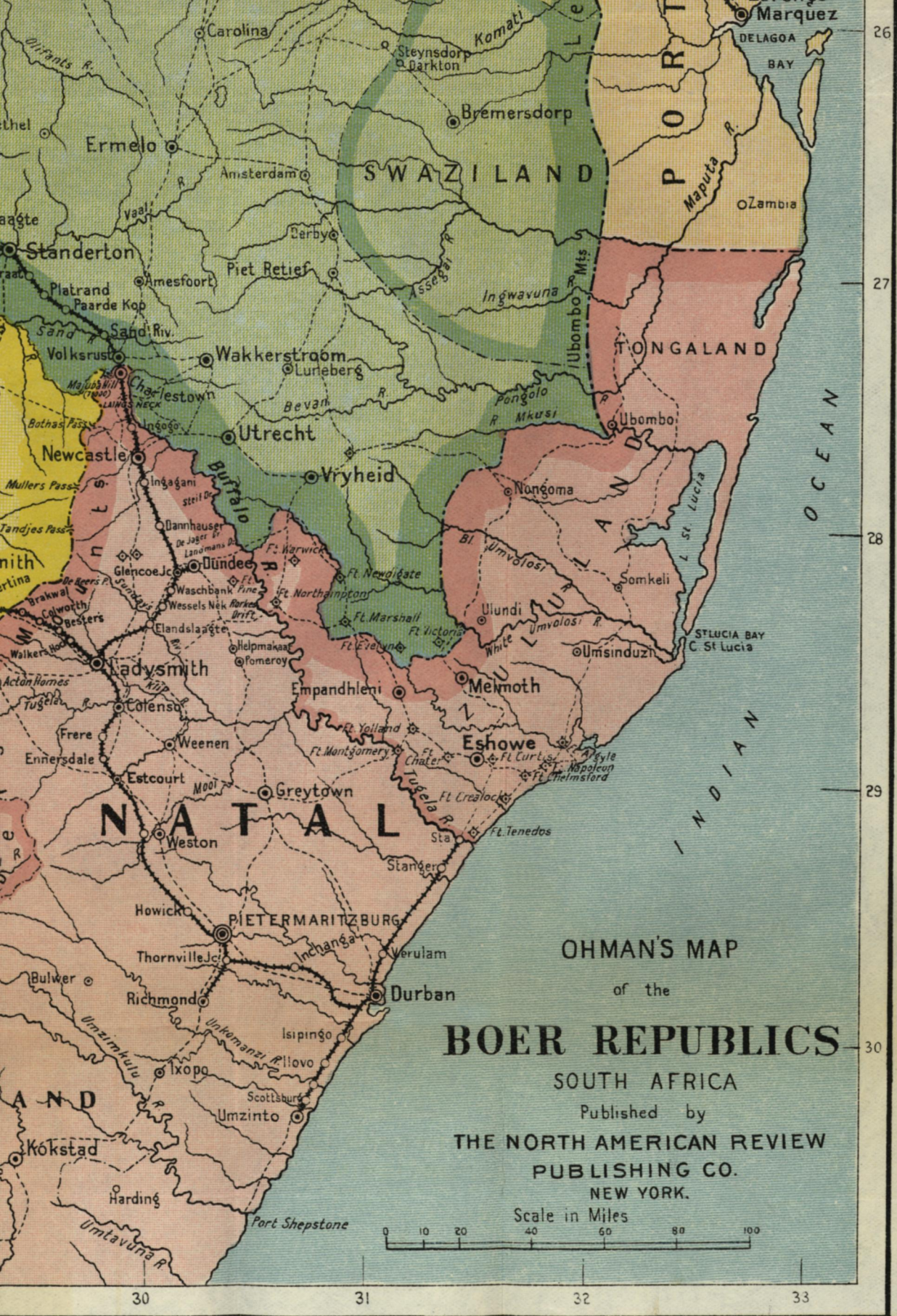












NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

No. DXVII.

DECEMBER, 1899.

THE HISTORICAL CAUSES OF THE PRESENT WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

BY THE RIGHT HON. JAMES BRYCE, M. P.

THE events which have led up to the present conflict in South Africa, which I am asked to sketch in outline for American readers, cannot well be understood without some little knowledge of the physical configuration of the country and the character of its people. It is a great, wild, dry, bare country, with an exceedingly small population of white men, and a population of blacks which is not large in comparison with its area. This area, taking South Africa to be the region which lies south of the Zambesi, is some 1,400,000 square miles, and within its limits there are much less than one million of white men, Dutch, English and Portuguese, with a handful of Germans—that is to say, less than the population of Philadelphia. Nearly one-half of that area is desert—by which I mean a practically waterless tract, no better for ranching or agriculture than the sagebrush deserts of Nevada. Of the rest, by far the larger part is much too dry for agriculture, but fit for sheep and cattle, resembling, roughly speaking, the ranching districts of western Nebraska or Wyoming. There are fertile valleys near the south and southeast coast, because the heat is there not so severe and the rainfall more abundant; but the interior is an elevated plain, where the strong sun rapidly dries up the

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rains of the summer months, so that cultivation must, nearly everywhere, be carried on by means of irrigation. Now, there are very few places in South Africa where it pays to irrigate the soil; and, consequently, there is, except here and there toward the coast, a very small number of persons engaged in agriculture. Neither are there any forests worth mentioning, nor any manufactures, except small local industries in the few towns. Till very recently, the whole occupation of the country, and that wherein its wealth lay, was the rearing of sheep and cattle. It is an occupation which gives employment to very few persons in proportion to the surface over which flocks and herds feed; and this is why the population has grown so slowly during the last two centuries and a half.

For South Africa is by no means a new European colony, like Australia. It was discovered at the end of the fifteenth century by Bartholomew Diaz, six years before the discovery of America. The first European settlement was planted at Sofala, on the south-east coast, by the Portuguese in A. D. 1505, the next by the Dutch at Cape Town in 1652. The Portuguese, however, never succeeded in establishing any hold upon the interior, and the extreme unhealthiness of the region where their posts were placed blighted the growth of their settlements, which are to-day quite insignificant, and will probably some day pass into the hands of stronger Powers. Besides, their blood has become mixed with that of the natives to an extent which has caused the race to deteriorate.

The Dutch settlement advanced very slowly for many years. It was governed by a company whose aim was rather to make money by trade than to develop the country, and maladministration produced a discontent which had begun to reveal the bold and restless character of the settlers. When England captured the Cape during the great war against Napoleon (in 1806), there were only some twenty-seven thousand whites in the whole colony. After the war was over, and when England, which had in 1814 paid six millions, sterling, to the Dutch for the country, was firmly planted there, some English settlers began to come in, as others have done from time to time ever since. But the influx of these settlers has been less than the natural increase of the Dutch population, so that in Cape Colony the inhabitants of Dutch stock to-day outnumber those of English stock, and the Dutch language

is (except in the towns) more generally spoken than is the English.

These two stocks have so much in common that it might have been expected that they would readily amalgamate, and at any rate would, as the Dutch and the English did long ago in New York, be on good terms with one another. They are akin in blood and in speech. They are both Protestant. In character and in habits, and, indeed, in appearance also, one may note many resemblances between the peasant of Holland and the peasant of East Anglia. If the English Government had been wise in its measures, if it had understood the country better and been careful to send out only sensible and sympathetic men as governors, the Dutch of South Africa, who had no attachment to Holland, might soon have become attached to England, and would at any rate have been, though they are naturally of an independent spirit, quiet and peaceable subjects. England, however, managed things ill. She altered the system of courts and local government, reducing the rights which the people had enjoyed. She insisted on the use of the English language to the exclusion of Dutch. In undertaking to protect the natives and the slaves, whom the Dutch were accused by the English missionaries of treating very harshly, she did what was right, but the farmers complained that the missionaries sometimes maligned them and greatly resented the attention which was paid to the charges. Finally she abolished slavery, and allotted a very inadequate sum as compensation to the South African slave owners, much of which sum never reached their hands, because it was made payable in London. These grievances, coupled with displeasure at the unwillingness of the Government to prosecute the troublesome and costly wars against the south-coast Kafirs, who frequently raided cattle and burnt the houses of the farmers on the frontier, determined a large body of Dutch farmers and ranchmen to quit the colony altogether, and go out into the wilderness which stretched far away to the northeast, much of it, especially that which lay to the north, a waterless desert, but the eastern part reported by the few hunters who had traversed it to contain plenty of good pasture. About ten thousand thus set off, and, when they had advanced beyond the borders of the colony, spread themselves over a tract of country some seven hundred miles long by three hundred broad, between the Orange River on the west-southwest

and the lower course of the Limpopo River on the north-northeast. Parts of this country lay empty of all inhabitants. Parts were inhabited by savage Kafir tribes, the more warlike of whom attacked the emigrants, and were defeated, and in some cases expelled by the latter, whose valor, whose firearms and whose horses enabled them to overcome enormously more numerous hosts of undisciplined natives. This emigration of 1836 is known as the Great Trek, and the Dutch who formed it are usually described by their own name of Boers, a word meaning farmers or peasants. It is convenient to call them by this name for the sake of distinguishing them from the more numerous and more sedentary Dutch who remained behind in Cape Colony as British, though, strictly speaking, every farmer or ranchman would be described in the Dutch language by the name of Boer.

This Great Trek of 1836 has been the source of all subsequent troubles between the Dutch and English races in South Africa. The circumstances attending it developed in the minds of the emigrant Boers three passions which have characterized them ever since, and which must be understood, because they are the key to the subsequent history of the country. One of these is a deep dislike to the British Government, which they conceived to have forced them to quit their old homes by a course of injustice and oppression. Another is a love of independence for its own sake, a sentiment which is in their Dutch and Huguenot blood (for some of the leading families were sprung from French Huguenots, who had gone to Africa from Holland after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes), and which had shown itself, even before England took the Cape, in risings against the Government of the Dutch East India Company. A third is an ardent attachment to their Calvinistic faith and to their old habits and usages. Cut off from all the influences of Europe, and leading a rude and solitary life on their enormous ranching farms, they were, when they went out into the wilderness, nearly two centuries behind the people of Western Europe in the thoughts, as well as in the arts, of modern civilization. The conditions of their warlike life among hostile savages after the Trek kept them so backward that they might really be said to belong rather to the seventeenth century than to the nineteenth.

Their virtues, as well as their faults, were of a seventeenth-century type, and have remained, in the more remote and thinly

peopled regions, still of that type—a fact which came into sharp relief when, within the last few years, a new crowd of English gold-seekers poured in among them. The old type has partially survived even among the more civilized Dutch of Cape Colony, and this has helped to keep up the sense of brotherhood between the emigrant Boers and their kinsfolk at the Cape.

Before I describe the relations of these emigrants to the British Government from 1836 to the present day, it may be well to say a few words about the natives, who constituted the vast majority of the inhabitants of the country.

When the first European settlers came, they found three races in the country—the Bushmen, a low type of aborigines, who lived by the chase; the Hottentots, savages of a somewhat higher order, who had sheep and cattle, but did not till the ground, and the Kafirs. The Bushmen were very few, and have now almost disappeared. They could not learn civilized ways or survive contact with a civilized people. The Hottentots, too, vanished, many tribes being swept off by smallpox, while the rest have either died out or become mixed with the negro slaves whom the Dutch brought from the coasts of Guinea. The Kafirs, however, have held their ground and even multiplied. The Dutch, and afterward the English, have carried on many sanguinary wars with them, for they are fierce in fight, as well as strong, muscular men. The last of these wars was that which the British South African Company waged against the Matabele in 1893, renewed by a native revolt in 1896; and it may be hoped that it is the last that will have to be waged, at any rate to the south of the Zambesi River, for the tribes have now begun to realize the hopelessness of resistance to the discipline and the superior arms of the white men. These wars were, all of them, except that against the Matabele, fought out along, or not far from, the coasts of the Indian Ocean, because the northern parts of the country, on both sides of the lower and middle course of the Orange River, is a desert region, which has no inhabitants, save a few wandering Hottentots and Bushmen. The result of the wars was to make the English masters of the whole country (except, of course, the Portuguese and German territories) which lies along the coast from Cape Town as far as the neighborhood of Delagoa Bay. The natives never took part in any of the conflicts between the English and the Dutch, to which I am going to refer, but their presence in several instances affected

those conflicts, because the English more than once stopped the Boers when the latter were conquering some native tribe, and because the English Government sometimes declared that the relations between the Boers and the natives constituted a danger to the peace of the country generally, which made their own interference necessary. It must, therefore, be remembered that the rivalry between the Boers and the English, the course of which is now to be sketched, went on, not *in vacuo*, so to speak, but in the presence of a native population far outnumbering the English and the Boers taken together.

When the Boers trekked out into the wilderness in 1836, the British Government, though sorry to see them go, did not follow them. It did not wish to possess the interior of South Africa, because it did not think the country worth having. It valued the Cape chiefly as a half-way house to India, for in those days the Suez Canal had not begun to be even talked of. Neither in those days had the passion for acquiring territory outside the pale of civilization seized upon the European Powers. Least of all did they desire African territories, because all Africa (except the strip along the Mediterranean) was believed to be either hopelessly barren or hopelessly unhealthy, the parts which were uninhabited, worthless; the parts which were inhabited, full of savages whom it would be costly to subdue, and from whom, when they had been subdued, little profit could be drawn. Accordingly, the British neither sent troops after the departing emigrants, nor deemed the emigrants to be acquiring the interior for Great Britain. Still, they did deem the emigrants to be still British subjects, for, as they had not become subjects of any other State, it was held they must still owe allegiance to the British Crown. This notion has in a vague sense never quite vanished from the British mind ever since. The emigrants, however, held that when they went out they renounced their British allegiance, and forthwith began to set up rude republican governments for themselves, governments which were managed by a meeting of all the adult males (called a *Volksraad* or *People's Council*), and in time of war—nearly all times being times of war—also by a smaller elective committee called a *Council* (*Krygsraad*). As the emigrants were scattered over an area of some three hundred thousand square miles, and were, even in 1846, ten years after the first of them left the Colony, less than twenty thousand in num-

ber, all told, it was impossible for them to have one Volksraad or one Government for the whole body. The various parties or communities, when they began to crystallize into communities, got on as they best could, each with its own Volksraad. After a time this became a small representative body, but when it was a primary assembly, the number of persons present was usually smaller than that of a town meeting in rural New England.

The British Government soon found itself, or thought itself, compelled to abandon its original policy of indifference to the doings of the emigrants, and so there began that struggle for the possession of the extra-colonial parts of South Africa, which has been the central stream of South African history for more than half a century. The first collision took place in what is now the Colony of Natal, a region then separated from Cape Colony by a mass of independent Kafir tribes, and itself ruled by the Zulu king Dingaan. Hearing of the fertility of this region, which is indeed one of the richest and best watered parts of Africa, a large body of Boer emigrants, who had been wandering over the great interior plateau, descended into it in 1838, and after a short but terrible struggle with Dingaan, who had treacherously massacred two parties of them, built the village of Pietermaritzburg (now the capital of Natal), and set up a republic which they called Natalia. This disquieted the British authorities at the Cape, who did not wish to see any non-British State established on the sea coast. The interior they did not much care about, because in the interior the Boers would be in contact with the natives only. But an independent republic on the coast, flying its own flag, was another affair. They were, moreover, afraid that trouble between the emigrants and the coast Kafirs might breed further trouble between the coast Kafirs and themselves. Accordingly, they sent (in 1842) a small British force to Durban (then called Port Natal), the best harbor on the coast, though they had some years before withdrawn a detachment which had been placed there, and had not complied with the request of the handful of English settlers who lived there to recognize them as a colony. The British troops were besieged by the Natalian Boers, but in the nick of time received reinforcements, which so completely turned the scale that the Boers presently submitted. The Republic of Natalia vanished, and many of the Boer emigrants returned north across the mountains, prizing their independence more than the good

pastures of Natal, and full of resentment at the Government which had stepped in to deprive them of the fruit of their victory over the Zulu king. Thus ended the first of the four armed collisions which have occurred between the English and the Boers, the first of their many strivings for the possession of the unappropriated parts of Africa.

Meanwhile, the interior was in a state of confusion and disorder, the Boers being too few in number to reduce to submission their native enemies, and the half-breed hunting clans called Griquas, the offspring of Dutch fathers and Hottentot mothers, who lived in the northeastern border of Cape Colony. The British Government, after fruitless attempts to create petty semi-independent States out of these unpromising materials, yielded to the pressure of events, and moved forward the frontier of its influence by annexing the country between the Orange River and the Vaal River, thereby asserting authority over such of the Boer emigrants as dwelt in this region. They named it the Orange River Sovereignty, and built a fort in it at a spot called Bloemfontein. This took place in 1846. Some of the Boers, unwilling to come again under British dominion, took up arms, and with the help of other Boers beyond the Vaal, overpowered the small British garrison. A British force was led against them by the Governor of the Cape, a tried soldier of the Peninsular War, who defeated them in an engagement and re-established British authority. But the troubles showed no sign of ending. A large Kafir tribe, the Basutos, who occupied the mountainous country south of the Orange River Sovereignty, and were formidable both by their numbers and by the difficult nature of their country, attacked the British force in the Sovereignty on one side, while the Boers from beyond the Vaal threatened it on another. It so happened that Cape Colony was at the same time involved in a war with the Kafirs of the south coast, so that troops could not be spared for these more remote districts, while there was not time to fetch any from England, then far more distant than now. Besides, the Government at home were getting tired of the vexations which their presence in the far interior caused them. They saw nothing to be gained by the possession of wide, pastoral wastes, where it was extremely difficult to keep order, difficult to control the rough white settlers, difficult to bridle the restless mass of Kafirs. Accordingly, the British Cabinet made up its mind to

take what would now be called an act of self-denying and perhaps pusillanimous renunciation, but was then regarded as an exercise of obvious common sense. It resolved to withdraw altogether from the interior, release the emigrant Boers from any claim it might still have to their allegiance and leave them and the Kafirs to fight out their quarrels without further interference. In 1852, a treaty—known as the Sand River Convention—was made with representatives of the Boers who dwelt beyond the Vaal River, which guaranteed to them “the right to manage their own affairs and to govern themselves according to their own laws, without any interference on the part of the British Government.” It was also thereby declared that no slavery should be permitted or practised by the Boers beyond the Vaal. Two years later, after a troublesome war with the Basutos, in which the British general narrowly escaped a serious reverse, had confirmed the disposition of the Government to withdraw, another Convention was made at Bloemfontein, by which the Boers living in the Sovereignty between the Vaal and Orange Rivers were “declared to be a free and independent people,” and the future independence of the country and its government was guaranteed. The British garrison was thereupon withdrawn from the Sovereignty, which was left to set up a government on its own account, subject, however, to a provision forbidding slavery and the slave trade—a provision not superfluous in either Convention, for the Boers were suspected of practising a system of apprenticing native servants which was with difficulty distinguishable from slavery. Both the great English parties were concerned in this abandonment of the interior, for the Convention of 1852 was approved by the Cabinet of Lord Derby; that of 1854 by the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen. Neither Convention excited any remonstrance in England, so little did men then care for colonial expansion in general or African territory in particular.

From these two recognitions of Boer independence there sprang up two Boer republics. After sixteen years of practical but legally unacknowledged independence, the emigrants who lived beyond the Vaal, and now began to be called Transvaal people, were at length masters of their own destinies. They were, however, divided into several small communities, as well as into numerous contending factions, and did not finally unite into one State till 1864. The Orange River farmers were less quarrelsome and

better educated, and, as they lived nearer the Colony, they were less rude, being, moreover, mixed with a certain number of English settlers. Their Republic took the name of the Orange Free State, and gave itself a very short and simple constitution, which has worked smoothly. It was for a time plagued by wars with the Basutos, but since the British Government assumed control over that tribe in 1869 these have ceased. The country is mostly too dry for agriculture, but it is covered with excellent pasture, which supported, until the great cattle plague of 1896, vast herds of cattle. Fortunately, no gold mines have been discovered, and only one diamond mine, so the temptations of wealth have not corrupted the simplicity of these republicans, who lived happily together till the outbreak of the present war, Englishmen sharing with Boers the offices of the State.

The Transvaal Republic was less fortunate. Its people were rather fewer in number, and were scattered over a wider territory. They were much rougher in habits, much more ignorant, much fonder of raiding the natives and more prone to discord among themselves. What with their intestine divisions, their native wars and their unwillingness to pay taxes, their Government was carried on with great difficulty and had, in 1877, become not only bankrupt, but virtually unable to enforce obedience. The British Government, which thought, rightly or wrongly, that the weakness and disorder of the Republic constituted a danger to the surrounding territories by inviting native attacks, sent a Commissioner to the Transvaal, who, in April, 1877, used the discretion which the Colonial Office had entrusted to him to proclaim the annexation of the country to the British Crown. It was a high-handed act, for the Republic had enjoyed complete independence, and Britain had no more legal right to annex it than she had to seize the neighboring territories of Portugal. The only justification was to be found in the circumstances of the State, which had only three dollars in its treasury, with no prospect of obtaining any more, because the citizens, who distrusted the President on account of his supposed theological errors, seemed to care very little whether they had a government at all, and were certainly unwilling to contribute to its support. It was believed that Cetewayo, the powerful and martial Zulu king, was likely to attack it, and the Commissioner doubtless believed that the public opinion of the Boer people, of whom there were now some forty

thousand, would approve—or at any rate would not actively resent—his conduct in placing them under a power which would defend them against Cetewayo and spend money on their country. The event, however, proved that he had acted foolishly, because precipitately. If he had waited a few weeks or months longer, it is possible, indeed probable, that the Boers would have asked him to promise them a British protectorate. But they did not like to have it thus thrust upon them; and, while the authorities of the Republic entered solemn protests, a memorial was drawn up and signed by a large majority of the citizens addressed to the British Government, and praying that the annexation should be reversed. Britain, however, refused to give way, believing that the opposition of the Boers would soon disappear, especially when they saw that English rule must conduce to the material prosperity of the country.

Unfortunately, the Colonial High Commissioner and the Colonial Office at home did not take the obviously proper steps to conciliate the people. They sent an arrogant and politically incapable military officer to govern men in whom the sentiment of democratic equality was extremely strong. They levied taxes stringently. They delayed so long in giving the free local government they had promised that the people despaired of ever receiving it. The passive displeasure which had at first showed itself now turned to active discontent; and when the leaders of that discontent found that the new English Ministry which came into power in April, 1880, just three years after the annexation, refused to reverse the act of their predecessors, they prepared to recover their independence by force of arms. In December, 1880, an insurrection broke out. The insurgents were few in number, but the British troops in the country were still fewer and wholly unprepared, so they were obliged to surrender or were shut up and besieged in a few fortified posts. A Boer force seized the chief pass leading from the Transvaal into Natal, because this was the route which an English army coming to reconquer the country would be sure to take. Here they repelled a small English force, for the English had as yet very few soldiers in Natal, and shortly afterward (February 26, 1881) defeated and killed the English commander, General Colley, who, with a want of prudence that has never been accounted for, led a detachment to the top of a mountain (Majuba Hill) commanding the pass, without taking

proper steps to guard the position or to secure support from the rest of his force. There were loud cries in England that vengeance should be taken for this defeat, which could easily have been avenged, for in a few weeks reinforcements arrived far too strong for the Boers to resist. But the British Government, much to its credit, gave no heed to these cries. It was to blame for having failed sooner to discover the real state of things in the Transvaal, and for not having done its best, by a prompt removal of grievances, to appease the discontent of the people. But, now that it knew the facts; knew that the hasty annexation had been a blunder; knew how much the Boers valued their independence; knew how strong was the sympathy felt for them by the Dutch element all over South Africa—a sympathy which might have ended in a war with the Free State and a civil war in Cape Colony—they determined to undo the annexation of 1877. A Convention was accordingly concluded in August, 1881, with the provisional government which the Transvaal people had set up. By this instrument, Britain recognized the Transvaal State as autonomous, reserving to herself, however, the control of all foreign relations, and declaring the suzerainty of the Queen. The Cabinet of Mr. Gladstone was warmly attacked in England for its action in thus, as its opponents said, weakly surrendering to rebels, while others held that it had acted not only magnanimously, but also wisely, since the evil of a race conflict between English and Dutch in South Africa far outweighed the objections to sitting down under a defeat, especially when all the world knew that the defeat could have been easily avenged, were mere vengeance a proper object of war.

Men still wrangle over the question in England, and may long continue to do so, for it is to some extent a moral as well as a political question, and different minds view moral problems differently. Regarded as a pure matter of politics, it may be pronounced to have been right, upon the *data* which the British Government then possessed, for there was nothing to be gained by reconquering a large country of slender value, and by undertaking to rule over a mass of disaffected subjects, while the danger of a race war in South Africa was to be at all hazards avoided. Nevertheless, as things have in fact turned out, much of the good which was then reasonably expected has failed to be secured. The Boers who deemed, and were indeed justified in deeming, the annexa-

tion of 1877 to have been an act of pure force, which gave the British Crown *no de jure* title to their allegiance, thought that when the insurrection had succeeded, their Republic ought to have been replaced in its old position under the Sand River Convention, a position of perfect independence. They, therefore, showed little gratitude for the concession of practical autonomy, and did not resign the hope of ultimately regaining complete independence. Besides, though they could not but see that the British Ministry had refrained from using their superior power to take vengeance which might have been easily taken, they knew that the danger of alienating the Cape Dutch had been one of the motives which determined its conduct. However, the whole question might, and probably soon would, have lost its importance but for an event which happened four years after, the discovery in the Transvaal of a gold field unique in the world.

When the Transvaal Boers had recovered their rights of internal self-government, they immediately began to work for two things: the concession of complete independence, such as they had enjoyed under the Sand River Convention, and the extension of their influence over the native territories that lay around them. Their War of Independence had stimulated in an amazing degree their national feeling, and had revived in them that bold and venturesome spirit which marked the first years after the Great Trek. Territorial expansion is, moreover, almost a necessity to them, because they live entirely by ranching, and need fresh pastures as the population increases. They began to spread out to the south into Zululand, and succeeded in establishing a petty republic there, which was afterward absorbed into the mother State. They attempted similar tactics on the west in Bechuanaland, but here the British Government interposed. It had been appealed to by the English missionaries, who disliked the Boers because they dealt harshly with the natives; and it was unwilling to see a region which might become important as opening a path from the Cape to Central Africa closed against it by the presence of another Power. Accordingly, an expedition was sent which chased the Boer adventurers out of Bechuanaland, and placed the Kafir tribes who dwelt there under British protection. There now remained only the country to the east and to the north of the Transvaal to be contended for by the Dutch and English races. To the east the Boers succeeded, after a long diplomatic controversy with

Britain, in getting hold of Swaziland, a small native territory inhabited by a branch of the Zulu race. They would have liked to go still further and reach the coast of the Indian Ocean, but Britain anticipated them by stepping in to proclaim a protectorate over the Kafir chiefs, who held the unhealthy little strip of land that lies between Swaziland and the sea. This was in 1894. On the north the British Government, who had again begun to doubt the wisdom of annexing huge slices of Africa—though the tide of English sentiment was now setting strongly for expansion—refused to occupy the country which lay between the Limpopo River and the Zambesi. But it did not refuse to allow one of its enterprising subjects to obtain a charter from the Crown founding a company intended to acquire land and work mines in that country. Mr. Cecil Rhodes, an Oxford graduate, and son of an English country clergyman, who had made a fortune at the Kimberley diamond mines, was the person who conceived this plan, and by whom the charter creating the British South Africa Company was procured. Under his auspices, a band of English settlers entered the unappropriated and little-known regions of Manica Land and Mashonaland, and, in 1890, set up a government there. They were just too quick for the Boers, who had meditated a trek into the same region, where there is plenty of good pasture. Three years afterward the company established its power over the wide area of Matabeleland, west of Mashonaland, by a war with the martial tribe of Matabele, whose king, Lo Bengula, fled away and died. With these events the long rivalry for the possession of the interior between Dutch and English came to an end, and the Transvaal found itself surrounded on all sides by British territory, except on the northeast, where it abuts upon the dominion of Portugal. Those dominions, however, it could not acquire from Portugal even if Portugal were willing to sell them, because Britain has by treaty a right of pre-emption of the district round Delagoa Bay, the harbor which both the Boers and the English would be so glad to obtain. On the whole, therefore, the English came off winners; for, whereas the Boers get only Swaziland and part of Zululand, their rivals secured the vast areas of Bechuanaland on the west, of Mashonaland and Matabeleland on the north.

In its other aim, the recovery of independence, the Transvaal Government had a nearly complete success. In 1884 they per-

suaded the late Lord Derby, then Colonial Secretary in the British Cabinet, to agree to a new Convention, whose articles supersede those of the Convention of 1881. This later instrument sensibly enlarges the rights and raises the international status of the "South African Republic" (a title now conceded to what had been called in 1881 the "Transvaal State"). Under the Convention of 1884, the British Crown retains the power of vetoing any treaties which the Republic may make, except with the Orange Free State. But the Republic is entitled to accredit diplomatic representatives to foreign courts; the protection of the natives is no longer placed under the care of a British Resident; the internal administration of the State is left entirely free from any sort of British control. The Republic is, in fact, with the important exception of the treaty-making power, to all intents and purposes independent. Most people in England now blame Lord Derby, who was certainly an unlucky Colonial Minister, for making this Convention. But his error—and it was an error—would have signified comparatively little, but for the event which befel immediately after it was committed. The Convention was signed in 1884. In 1885 the auriferous conglomerate beds of the Witwatersrand were discovered in the southern part of the Transvaal. They form not only the richest gold field in the world, but a gold field unlike any other in giving a fairly uniform and certain yield of so much gold, rather greater in some beds, rather less in others, to the ton of ore. Until this discovery, the Transvaal had been, though a few gold reefs were being worked in the mountains on its eastern border, really a vast pastoral wilderness, very poor, and with only about one and a half white inhabitants to the square mile, most of them semi-nomad ranchmen. It was a country somewhat like New Mexico, though the population was smaller and the pasture thinner. Now a stream of immigrants from the rest of South Africa, from Europe, from Australia, from North America, began to rush in, so that within a few years the white population more than trebled.

The first result of this great and sudden change was to enrich those few of the Boer farmers who had owned and who now promptly sold the land where the gold beds were worked, and also to benefit a somewhat larger number by creating a market for agricultural produce. The revenue of the State, which had been trifling, began to rise rapidly. This was so far good. But the

Government soon bethought themselves that the new comers (most of whom were British), when they had become citizens and began to cast their votes, would constitute a large section, and before long a majority, of the voters. They would then be able, by electing persons like themselves to the Assembly and to the executive offices of the State, to revolutionize it completely, swamping the old citizens, getting rid of the old-fashioned Boer ways—in fact, making the country an English instead of a Dutch country. From this prospect they recoiled in horror. It was not in order to be overrun at last by a crowd of English, Australian and American miners, employed by capitalists, mostly of Jewish extraction, that they or their fathers had trekked out of Cape Colony, fought and vanquished the hosts of heathen Kafirs, founded their own Republic, thrown off by their valor the yoke which England had for four years laid upon them. To keep out the immigrants and forbid the working of the mines might be difficult, and this course would, moreover, sacrifice the growing revenue which was raised from the mines. They, therefore, resolved to keep the immigrants, but to exclude them, at least for a good while to come, from exerting political power. This was done by lengthening the period of residence and other formalities prescribed for the acquisition of burgher rights and therewith of the electoral franchise. The method has been much denounced, and it has turned out badly, as the sequel has showed. But it was an obvious form of self-preservation. Those who have made a country, and are ruling a country; those who like the country as it is and object to new-fangled ways, cannot be expected to open their arms to new-comers and invest them with the fulness of their own political privileges. The immigrants complained bitterly that everywhere else in South Africa a settler from Europe could get a vote after two or three years' residence; why, then, not in the Transvaal also? The answer was that the Transvaal was the only part of South Africa where the new settlers were becoming more numerous than the old citizens; where, therefore, admission after three years' residence might mean a complete transfer of political control to a wholly new set of people, differing in thoughts, habits, tastes and language from the folk that had theretofore possessed the land. What are the "natural rights" of these two sets of persons, and by what kind of compromise the justice of this very exceptional case ought to be met, is a question which I leave to the reader.

But unluckily for both the old Boers and the immigrant settlers (or *Uitlanders*, as they are commonly called), the matter was complicated by another fact. The Boers were an ignorant and rude people. They were skilful hunters, strenuous fighters, pious Calvinists, and endowed with many excellent qualities. But they were quite without the sort of knowledge and skill that are needed to administer a modern State, and especially one which, having become the field of a great industry, was swiftly growing in wealth and population. Accordingly, the administration which they provided for the new settlers was very inefficient and very costly. Moreover, the virtues which had adorned their rustic simplicity yielded, in too many instances, to the temptations presented by the control of a large revenue and by the power of granting valuable concessions. Thus the Administration became not only inefficient, but to some extent corrupt. As measles, which in civilized countries is only a passing childish ailment, has sometimes proved, when introduced among savage peoples, a deadly plague, so the bacillus of pecuniary corruption, which the great States of Western Europe have pretty well extirpated from their civil services and legislatures, sometimes appears as a virulent malady in communities where there had previously been too little wealth for the formation of a *nidus* fit for its growth. Thus it came to pass that, while the material prosperity of the Transvaal increased, its Government, so far from improving, became worse than before. It did not supply what a progressive industrial community needs; and it was certainly not altogether pure, though how far the impurity went is a matter of so much controversy that I will not venture to express a positive opinion.

Under such conditions, it was not strange that the new settlers should have soon become discontented. They complained that they were given neither good administration, nor any constitutional means of securing it. Being far richer than the old burghers, they paid nearly all the taxation, but had no voice in the disposal of the revenue. If the Administration had been reformed, their exclusion from the franchise would have sunk to a mere theoretic grievance. If the franchise had been granted to them, it would have been their own fault had the Administration remained unreformed. But, as things were, they felt aggrieved, and found no means of removing their grievances. Constitutional agitation was tried, but as they had few sympathizers in the

Legislature, which consisted chiefly of old-fashioned Boers from the country, nothing came of it. Then a few of the leaders formed, in the end of 1894, or beginning of 1895, a secret plan for rising in arms against the Government. The objection to this plan was that while the Boers were all expert riflemen, few of the Uitlanders had arms, and still fewer were trained to use them. However, they persevered. Some of the capitalists came into the plan, for though capitalists do not as a rule favor revolutions, this particular revolution would have benefited the mine owners, by enabling them to work the gold reefs more cheaply and develop them more rapidly. Accordingly, they helped with money, and large stores of arms were secretly conveyed into Johannesburg, the city which had suddenly sprung into greatness in the center of the mining district. Then, too, Mr. Cecil Rhodes, at that time Prime Minister of Cape Colony, and managing director of the British South Africa Company, came into the plan, and brought into it Dr. Jameson, administrator of the territories of that company, and able to direct the movements of the body of mounted police which the company maintained.

In a book called "Impressions of South Africa," which was published two years ago, I have, besides sketching the history of the Boers, described pretty fully the circumstances which led to the formation of this plan, the motives which induced different sections of the inhabitants to favor it, and the causes which led to its failure. The story cannot be told here, for it is very much involved, and hardly admits of being told briefly; nor is the whole of it yet known to the public, although two Parliamentary Committees, one of the Cape Assembly, one of the British House of Commons, have investigated the matter at great length. The point best worth noting is this, that the conspiracy might possibly have succeeded if it had been allowed to remain a pure Uitlander conspiracy at Johannesburg. But there was superadded to it an arrangement that Dr. Jameson, with a force of the company's armed and mounted police, should come in to help the insurrection which was to break out at Johannesburg. The conspirators, finding some difficulties crop up, postponed the day of the rising. But Dr. Jameson, becoming impatient of delay, started on the day originally fixed (in the end of December, 1895), before they were ready to meet or receive him. He was stopped by a rapidly summoned Boer force, and obliged, with all his men, to capitulate.

The Johannesburg leaders, who had raised their followers so far as they could at short notice, on hearing of Dr. Jameson's departure, were then also obliged to lay down their arms, and the whole movement collapsed.

Its consequences, however, remained, and most pernicious have they been. All the subsequent troubles of South Africa, including the outbreak of the present war, are due to this Johannesburg rising, or rather to the still more unhappy expedition of the company's police, which is now commonly called the Jameson Raid. The dislike which the bulk of the Transvaal Boers felt for the British Government, already sufficiently pronounced, was intensified. The reforming party among the Boers, not very large, but including men of talent and influence, was discouraged, and has been able to effect little or nothing ever since. The power of the President, Mr. Paul Krüger, whose strength of character, long official experience, and intimate knowledge of the character of his countrymen, have given him an unequalled influence over them, has been further increased; and it has unfortunately been used to arrest all changes. Little or nothing had been done down to June last, either to improve the Administration or to conciliate the Uitlander population by making it easier for them to acquire citizenship, and therewith a permanent interest in the country and a share of political power. The policy of repression had been pursued, not only by restricting the right of public meeting and of writing in the press, but also by the construction of a fort to dominate Johannesburg and by the continued importation of large quantities of munitions of war. These latter precautions were perfectly natural. Any Government which had escaped destruction so narrowly as did that of President Krüger in December, 1895, would have done the like. The mistake was, that measures of reform were not made to go hand in hand with measures of defense. If the Uitlanders were not to be admitted to citizenship, they ought at least to have been given a better administration. By this time they vastly outnumbered the Boers. Nobody knows the exact figures, but it is conjectured that the total number of Transvaal burghers and their families does not exceed eighty thousand, while that of the recent immigrants may reach one hundred and sixty thousand. Most of the former are scattered thinly over the country; nearly all of the latter are gathered in the mining district round Johannesburg, which is practically an

English, or rather Anglo-Jewish, city, with a sprinkling of Australians, Americans, Germans and Frenchmen. (Among the Americans there have been some eminent mining engineers, who have brought their Californian experience and skill to bear upon the working of the auriferous strata.)

The effect of the Jameson expedition was no less mischievous in other parts of South Africa than in the Transvaal. It roused Dutch feeling, which as a political force was almost dying out in the British Colonies, into more than its old vehemence. The Orange Free State, which had up till December, 1895, condemned the exclusive policy pursued by President Krüger's Government, now rallied to its sister Republic, not only from a sense of kinship, but because it believed its own highly prized independence to be in danger. It concluded a treaty with the Transvaal by which each of the two Republics bound itself to defend the other if unjustly attacked. In Cape Colony the two political parties, which had latterly been divided by lines of economic interest rather than by racial feeling—for the one was the party of the agriculturists and stock-farmers, the other of the commercial townfolk—became identified with the **two races**, and passion ran high between them. The Dutch accused the English of desiring to acquire the gold fields and blot out the two Republics. The English accused the Dutch of desiring to make all South Africa Dutch, and shake off the British connection; nor were they appeased by the fact that a Dutch majority in the Legislative Assembly, led by a Prime Minister who, though not himself of Dutch stock, had the support of the Dutch party, had in 1898 unanimously voted an annual sum of £30,000, sterling (\$150,000), as the voluntary contribution of the Colony to the naval defense of the British Empire.

To an Englishman who examines the facts with calmness, six thousand miles away from the heated atmosphere of South Africa, both accusations appear equally groundless. There were, no doubt, some among the English who did desire to seize the richest gold field in the world, and were working hard to bring on war with that aim. There were other Englishmen, far more numerous, who longed to humble what they thought the arrogance of the Dutch, and, as they expressed it, "to wipe out Majuba Hill," for the English in South Africa, strange as it may seem, have never forgotten or forgiven that petty reverse. But the

great mass of Colonial English were wholly unaffected by the former, and only slightly affected by the latter motive. What they did wish was to bring down the pride of the Dutch, to vindicate the supremacy of England in South Africa, which they thought endangered, as well as to make the Uitlanders predominant in the Transvaal. With the Free State they had no quarrel. The Dutch, on the other hand, were proud of the existence of their two Republics, hoped to see them independent and prosperous, and desired to maintain among themselves what they call their Afrikaner sentiment. But it was only a few of the more violent and fanciful spirits who dreamt of ousting England and turning all South Africa into one Dutch commonwealth. There is not, so far as one can ascertain from any evidence yet produced, the slightest foundation for the allegation, so assiduously propagated in England, that there was any general conspiracy of the Colonial Dutch, or that there existed the smallest risk of any unprovoked attack by them, or by the Free State, or by the Transvaal itself, upon the power of England.

This was the state of facts in South Africa, these the feelings of the various sections of its population, when the controversy which has led to the present war became acute. I must not attempt to describe the negotiations which went on during the summer and autumn of this year, or to apportion the blame for their failure between the British Government and that of the Transvaal. To do so would lead me into a criticism of the conduct of the Colonial Office and the Cabinet of Lord Salisbury; and I do not think it desirable that one who is actively engaged in political life in his own country should address to the public of another country strictures on his political opponents, even when he believes that party feeling has nothing to do with those strictures. I will therefore wind up this sketch by a few words on the legal position of the two parties to the war, a matter which is in the main outside the sphere of party controversy.

Under the Convention of 1884, which fixed the relations of Britain and the South African Republic, the latter had the most complete control of its internal affairs, and Britain possessed no more general right of interfering with those affairs than with the affairs of Belgium or Portugal. The suzerainty which has been claimed for her, if it existed (for its existence under the Convention of 1884 is disputed), related solely to the power of making

treaties, and did not touch any domestic matter. When, therefore, the British Government was appealed to by the Uitlander British subjects who lived in the Transvaal to secure a redress of their grievances, her title to address the Boer Government and demand redress depended primarily upon the terms of the Convention of 1884, any violation of which she was entitled to complain of; and, secondly, upon the general right which every State possesses to interpose on behalf of its subjects when they are being ill-treated in any foreign country. Under these circumstances it might have been expected that the questions which would have arisen before Britain went to war for the sake of her subjects living in the Transvaal, would be these two:

First: Were the grievances of her subjects so serious, was the behavior of the Transvaal Government when asked for redress so defiant or so evasive, as to contribute a proper *casus belli*?

Secondly: Assuming that the grievances (which were real, but in my opinion not so serious as has been frequently alleged) and the behavior of the Transvaal did amount to a *casus belli*, was it wise for Britain, considering the state of feeling in South Africa, and the mischief to be expected from causing permanent disaffection among the Dutch population; and considering also the high probability that the existing system of government in the Transvaal would soon, through the action of natural causes, break down and disappear—was it wise for her to declare and prosecute war at this particular moment?

Strange to say, neither of these two questions ever in fact arose. That which caused the war was the discussion of another matter altogether, which was admittedly not a grievance for the redress of which Britain had any right to interfere, and which, therefore, could not possibly amount to a *casus belli*. This matter was the length of time which should elapse before the new immigrants into the Transvaal could be admitted to citizenship, a matter which was entirely within the discretion of the Transvaal Legislature. The Boers made concessions, but the British Government held these concessions insufficient. In the course of this discussion the British Ministry used language which led the Transvaal people to believe that they were determined to force the Boer Government to comply with their demands; and they followed up their despatches by sending troops from England to South

Africa. They justified this action by pointing out (and the event has shown this to have been the fact), that the British garrison in South Africa was insufficient to defend the Colonies. But the Boers very naturally felt that if they remained quiet till the British forces had been raised to a strength they could not hope to resist, they would lose the only military advantage they possessed. Accordingly, when they knew that the Reserves were being called out in England, and that an army corps was to be sent to South Africa, they declared war, having been for some time previously convinced, rightly or wrongly, that the British Government had resolved to coerce them. They were in a sore strait, and they took the course which must have been expected from them, and indeed the only course which brave men, who were not going to make any further concessions, could have taken. And thus the question whether the grievances amounted to a *casus belli* never came up at all. The only *casus belli* has been the conduct of the two contending parties during a negotiation, the professed subject of which was in no sense a *casus belli*. Some have explained this by saying that a conflict was in fact inevitable, and that the conduct of the two parties is really, therefore, a minor affair. Others hold that a conflict might have been and ought to have been avoided, and that a more skilful and tactful diplomacy would either have averted it, or have at any rate so managed things that, when it came, it came after showing that a just cause for war, according to the usage of civilized States, did in fact exist. No one, however, denies that the war in which England will, of course, prevail, is a terrible calamity for South Africa, and will permanently embitter the relations of Dutch and English there. To some of us it appears a calamity for England also, since it is likely to alienate, perhaps for generations to come, the bulk of the white population in one of her most important self-governing colonies. It may, indeed, possibly mean for her the ultimate loss of South Africa.

JAMES BRYCE.